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G.I.'s on Brief Salvador Tours Are Said to Aid U.S. Advisers

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SAN SALVADOR, Feb. 14 — A United States Embassy official here said today that a 55-man limit on United States military advisers did not include military personnel sent to El Salvador for less than two weeks of temporary duty.

Members of the United States military assigned to El Salvador for less than two weeks have equipped new aircraft for combat and repaired airplanes belonging to the Salvadoran air force, the embassy official said.

The use of such temporary personnel would appear to let the United States have a stronger military presence in El Salvador than would be indicated by the total number of United States military men normally considered to be in the country. The number of American soldiers here has been a continuing source of debate between the Congress and the Administration.

A report earlier this week to the Congressional Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus accused the Reagan Administration of "insufficient, misleading and in some cases false information" about United States aid to El Salvador. The report cited the use of military personnel on temporary duty as an example of Administration efforts to deceive Congress.

The United States Embassy official strongly denied that Congress had been misinformed about the use of United States military personnel on temporary duty here.

"If they're here for less than two weeks, they're not counted," the official said. "It's the policy, so argue it with the policy people."

The number of United States soldiers allowed to work here has almost doubled in the last two years. Once se-

verely restricted in their movements, the advisers are now allowed to move anywhere in the country with Salvadoran Army units, as long as they judge it unlikely that they will come under direct attack, according to guidelines distributed by the United States Embassy.

Under the rules, an embassy spokesman said, the United States can have more than 100 soldiers in El Salvador in several categories:

¶55 trainers, who directly instruct Salvadoran soldiers in military tactics.

¶13 members of the military group on permanent assignment to the United States Embassy, who monitor the use of United States military assistance and consult with Salvadoran officers. Until 1984 they were included in the 55-man limit on trainers. Their exclusion from that limit allowed an increase in the number of trainers.

¶Between 4 and 6 "communicators," who operate the embassy's communications network.

¶Between 20 and 26 military medical specialists, who work in what the embassy calls "humanitarian assistance," training Salvadoran military medical personnel who tend sick and wounded soldiers.

¶5 defense attachés, who send military intelligence to the Defense Department.

¶Between 17 and 20 Marine guards assigned to protect the embassy.

The embassy official said that in his estimation, no United States soldier on less than two weeks of temporary duty in the country was involved in training Salvadorans. Another embassy official said the definition of training was a "matter of interpretation."